

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 ACDA-19 IO-14 EB-11 COME-00 DRC-01 /148 W

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R 091718Z NOV 73

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5461

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

UNCLAS LONDON 13127

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, UK

SUBJECT: BOTH MAJOR PARTIES LOSE GROUND IN

BY-ELECTIONS

REF: LONDON 13095

1. SUMMARY: BOTH MAJOR PARTIES LOST GROUND RIGHT
ACROSS THE BOARD IN YESTERDAY'S FOUR PARLIAMENTARY
BY-ELECTIONS. THE LIBERALS KEPT THEIR REVIVAL GOING
BY TAKING A SEAT FROM THE CONSERVATIVES AND THE

CONSERVATIVES RETAINED THE OTHER TWO SEATS BY SHARPLY
REDUCED MARGINS. THE RESULTS INDICATE THAT THE
ELECTORATE REMAINS DISSATISFIED WITH THE GOVERNMENT
BUT UNPERSUADED THAT LABOR OFFERS A DESIRABLE
ALTERNATIVE. END SUMMARY

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2. HOVE - LIBERALS MADE SHARP INROADS INTO BOTH THE CONSERVATIVE AND LABOR VOTE, BUT FAILED TO CAPTURE THIS TORY STRONGHOLD. THE PERCENTAGE RESULTS, WITH THE 1970 FIGURES IN PARENTHESES, WERE:

CONSERVATIVES	48 (69)
LIBERALS	37 (-)
LABOR	12 (31)
NATIONAL FRONT	3 (-)

3. BERWICK - AFTER A LONG AND HARD-FOUGHT CAMPAIGN THAT BROUGHT OUT MORE VOTERS THAN AT THE LAST GENERAL ELECTION, THE LIBERALS SCRAPED HOME BY ONLY 57 VOTES TO TAKE THIS SEAT FROM THE CONSERVATIVES. THE RESULTS WERE:

LIBERALS	40 (22)
CONSERVATIVES	40 (51)
LABOR	20 (27)

4. EDINBURGH NORTH - THE CONSERVATIVES LOST A SIZEABLE NUMBER OF VOTES, BUT WITH THE OPPOSITION SPLIT THREE WAYS, MANAGED TO HOLD THIS SEAT BY A COMFORTABLE MARGIN. THE RESULTS WERE:

CONSERVATIVES	39 (53)
LABOR	24 (37)
SCOTTISH NATIONALISTS	19 (-)
LIBERALS	18 (10)

5. GLASGOW GOVAN - THE SCOTTISH NATIONALISTS SCORED A SURPRISE UPSET VICTORY IN THIS "SAFE" LABOR SEAT. THEY FIELDIED AN ATTRACTIVE, ENERGETIC YOUNG WOMAN AND CAPITALIZED ON THE DISTRICT'S SENSE OF BEING NEGLECTED. THEIR CAMPAIGN WAS ALSO BOLSTERED BY THE PUBLICATION LAST WEEK OF THE KILBRANDON REPORT ADVOCATING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A SCOTTISH ASSEMBLY. THE RESULTS WERE:

SCOTTISH NATIONALISTS	42 (10)
LABOR	38 (60)
CONSERVATIVES	12 (28)
LIBERALS	8 (-)

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6. WRAP-UP - IN ALL FOUR CONTESTS BOTH MAJOR PARTIES LOST SUBSTANTIAL GROUND WHILE THE LIBERALS GAINED. THE LIBERALS HAVE WON FIVE BY-ELECTIONS IN THE PAST THIRTEEN MONTHS AND NOW HOLD ELEVEN SEATS. THE SCOTTISH NATIONALISTS HOLD TWO. POPULAR DISSATISFACTION WITH THE GOVERNMENT, PRIMARILY OVER ITS FAILURE TO CONTROL INFLATION MORE EFFECTIVELY, HAS CLEARLY NOT ABATED. THE CONSERVATIVES' ONLY CONSOLATION FROM

YESTERDAY'S RESULTS IS THAT LABOR IS DOING JUST AS
POORLY. THE GOVERNMENT'S OVERALL MAJORITY NOW STANDS
AT SIXTEEN.

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